

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 8146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS, XF

SUBJECT: ISRAEL VIEWS OF SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

REFS: (A) BONN 20085 (NOTAL), (B) GENEVA 9465 (NOTAL),

(C) DAKAR 7796 (NOTAL), (D) VIENNA 9627 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: RABIN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AT GENEVA GAVE HIM A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO PUT FORWARD HIS VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS AND TO HOLD A SERIES OF BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. HIS PERFORMANCE HAS IN GENERAL ELICITED FAVORABLE COMMENT IN ISRAEL. END SUMMARY

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH WAS HELD IN GENEVA NOVEMBER 26-28 WITH SEVERAL MEMBERS OF
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THE GROUP WHICH ACCOMPANIED PRIME MINISTER RABIN. THEIR

INTEREST WAS UNDERSTANDABLY FOCUSED ON THE MIDDLE EAST ASPECTS OF THE CONFERENCE. WE WERE TOLD, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT RABIN'S SPEECH TO THE CONFERENCE ON NOVEMBER 27 IN WHICH HE PROPOSED A HELSINKI TYPE CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST SHOULD BE SEEN AS SOMETHING MORE THAN A ROUTINE ANSWER TO RECENT PEACE INITIATIVES FROM EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT. RABIN'S SPEECH WAS PRIMARILY AN EFFORT TO PERSUADE IMPORTANT POLITICAL LEADERS IN EUROPE THAT ISRAEL'S POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS IS CORRECT. A SECOND FACTOR--ALSO MORE IMPORTANT THAN AN ANSWER TO SADAT --WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AN IMPACT UPON DOMESTIC POLITICAL CLIMATE IN ISRAEL. THE JUDGMENT OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN IS THAT RABIN WAS SUCCESSFUL ON BOTH COUNTS. WE WERE TOLD THAT THE SPEECH MADE A GREAT IMPRESSION ON PARTICIPANTS, PRESS AND OBSERVERS AT GENEVA AND THAT SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS, PRESS AND OBSERVERS AT GENEVA AND THAT SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS (BAHR AND PALME WERE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED) SAID IT WAS THE MAJOR SPEECH AT THE CONFERENCE.

2. OUR SOURCES WERE ALSO OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH THE MIDDLE EAST RESOLUTION WHICH WAS ADOPTED (REFTEL A). THEY HAD BEEN PREPARED TO ACCEPT OTHER DRAFT RESOLUTIONS RATHER THAN THE ONE WHICH WAS ADOPTED (WHICH THEY CLAIM WAS THEIR OWN TEXT, PUT FORWARD BY THE FRENCH, GERMANS AND AUSTRIANS). INCIDENTALLY, WE WERE INFORMED THAT SENEGAL, MALTA AND FINLAND ABSTAINED RATHER THAN VOTED AGAINST THE RESOLUTION.

3. RABIN HAD A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS WITH SOCIALIST COLLEAGUES. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD WHAT WAS CHARACTERIZED TO US AS A LONG AND USEFUL MEETING WITH AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR KREISKY (REFTEL D) IN WHICH A NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS WERE SETTLED. THE ISRAELIS NOW SEE KREISKY AS SEEKING TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND REGARD HIM AS A WELL-INTENTIONED AND CLEVER POLITICIAN WHO HAS A TENDENCY FROM TIME TO TIME TO GO OVERBOARD. RABIN SAID THAT HE WOULD BE PLEASED FOR KREISKY TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THAT ANYTHING KREISKY COULD DO TO BRING TOGETHER ARAB AND ISRAELI LEADERS WOULD BE FINE. HOWEVER, ON SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS AUSTRIA MUST REMEMBER ITS LIMITATIONS: IT CAN DO NOTHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. THE TWO LEADERS DID NOT DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF SOVIET JEWISH DROPOUTS.
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4. RABIN'S MEETING WITH PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER SOARES WAS CHARACTERIZED AS "GOOD." SOARES TOLD HIM HE WAS LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO REESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. HE HAD SPOKEN SEVERAL MONTHS AGO TO EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT AND SADAT HAD TOLD HIM HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO ISRAELI/PORTUGUESE RELATIONS. (COMMENT: A DASH OF SKEPTICISM SHOULD BE ADDED HERE.)

5. THE MEETING BETWEEN RABIN AND SENEGALESE PRESIDENT SENGHOR (REFTEL C) CAM ABOUT AS SENGHOR'S INITIATIVE. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF REESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, RABIN WAS PLEASED TO NOTE THE SENGHOR EXPRESSED THE SAME VIEWS IN THEIR PRIVATE MEETING HE DID IN HIS REMARKS IN THE PLENARY SESSIONS AT THE CONFERENCE. SENGHOR REPORTEDLY TOLD RABIN THAT THE ARABS WERE TROUBLED ABOUT HIS (SENGHOR'S) BEING THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL FROM THE THIRD WORLD.

6. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD TWO SEPARATE MEETINGS EACH WITH BRANDT AND SCHMIDT BUT HAD NO SEPARATE MEETING WITH MITTERRAND, WHO HAD VISITED ISRAEL A MONTH EARLIER. RABIN INVITED ALL THESE LEADERS TO VISIT ISRAEL AND TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE OF THE ISRAELI LABOR PARTY SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 22-24, 1977. BRANDT, KREISKY AND PALME HAVE REPORTEDLY PROMISED TO ATTEND.

7. THE MEDIA REACTION IN ISRAEL TO THE MEETING AND TO RABIN'S PARTICIPATION HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND FAVORABLE. MOST OF THE PAPERS EDITORIALIZED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SUCCESSFULLY PUT FORWARD ISRAEL'S POSITION AND HAD ENHANCED HIS OWN PERSONAL STANDING. THE INDEPENDENT HAARETZ WROTE THAT "THE PRIME MINISTER DID THE RIGHT THING IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN A MANNER THAT WILL IMPROVE ISRAEL'S IMAGE WITH MANY STATESMEN WHO HAVE OFTEN COMPLAINED THAT SHE HAS FAILED TO GIVE DUE CONSIDERATION TO THEIR VIEWS." THE HISTADRUT PAPER DAVAR SAID: "THE RESOLUTION OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL IS UNDOUBTEDLY AN ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE LABOR PARTY DELEGATION AND FOR MR. RABIN. AFTER THE EROSION OF THE PAST FEW YEARS, THE CONFERENCE SUPPORTED THE PRINCIPAL TENETS OF THE ISRAELI VIEW CONCERNING NEGOTIATIONS, MAINTAINING THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GENEVA TALKS SHOULD BE ONLY BETWEEN SOVEREIGN STATES, WITHOUT ANY IMPOSED SOLUTION." INDEPENDENT YEDIOT AHRONOT NOTED VIENNA REPORTS OF THE KREISKY-RABIN CONVERSATION AND FOUND THAT FURTHER CLARIFICATION WAS REQUIRED FROM RABIN: "FOLLOWING THE LENGTHY TALK CHANCELLOR KREISKY HAD WITH MR. RABIN IN GENEVA, HE (KREISKY) STATED, UPON HIS RETURN TO VIENNA, THAT IT HAD NOW BEEN CLARIFIED TO HIM THAT ISRAEL TOO HAD AT LAST SEEN FIT TO RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF A 'PALESTINIAN NATION'... WE ARE ENTITLED TO ASK THE PRIME MINISTER WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING IN HIS REMARKS TO KREISKY TO JUSTIFY THE VIEW THE LATTER ATTRIBUTES TO US."

8. COMMENT: BUFFETED AT HOME BY ECONOMIC AND LABOR TROUBLES AND SOMEWHAT ON THE DEFENSIVE FROM THE ARAB "PEACE OFFENSIVE," RABIN OBVIOUSLY RELISHED THE OPPORTUNITY TO HOB-NOB WITH

OTHER PRIME MINISTERS AND SOCIALIST LEADERS. AS THE ONLY VOICE
FROM THE MIDDLE EAST HE HAD THE FLOOR PRETTY MUCH TO HIMSELF--
HE WAS, AFTER ALL, SPEAKING TO FRIENDS AND SYMPATHIZERS--ON
THE ISSUE OF WHAT THE NEXT STEPS FOR PEACE COULD BE IN THE
AREA. HE SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN EFFECTIVE ADVANTAGE OF THE
OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO HIM AND TO HAVE DONE ISRAEL'S
CAUSE NO HARM.
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